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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4154
INFO RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 4765
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH IMMEDIATE 8243
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LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA
DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI (WALKER, SHUKAN, JACHIM), INL, DRL, PRM

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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [KISL](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#) [XF](#)

SUBJECT: KING ABDULLAH TO HOST URGENT HAMAS AND FATAH TALKS
IN KINGDOM

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Gfoeller for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) On January 29, the media reported that on January 28 King Abdullah invited Hamas and Fatah leaders to an emergency meeting in Mecca in order to end the current conflict in Gaza and the West Bank. The King invited them to settle their differences through dialogue, saying their fighting was a "shameful, gross injustice" which is tarnishing the image of Palestinians. He called on them to "put an immediate end to this tragedy." The King cited several verses from the Qu'ran against Muslims fighting Muslims. He said the infighting would only serve the enemies of the Ummah.

12. (SBU) The media reported that both Hamas (exiled leader Khaled Mesha'al and Palestinian Prime Minister Esmail Haniya) and Fatah (President Mahmud Abbas and senior Fatah official and presidential advisor Ahmed Abdul Rahman) accepted King Abdullah's offer. However, no date has been set for the meeting. Meanwhile, both Hamas and Fatah continue to kill and kidnap each other. Previous Egyptian and Jordanian attempts to mediate have been ineffective.

13. (S) On January 29, a MFA contact responsible for Arab League affairs reported that the meeting will most likely be held in Taif instead of Mecca so that Palestinian Christian leaders can attend. He said that the timing of the meeting is to be confirmed but it will be held before the Arab League summit on March 28. He said the SAG continues to host these meetings to bring peace between Muslims, citing a 1990 meeting of Afghan leaders, the 2006 meeting of Iraqi Sunni and Shi'a leaders, and a planned meeting of Lebanese and Syrian leaders, even though the results have not met expectations.

COMMENT

14. (C) The Saudi media lauded the King's offer and warned that the infighting could lead to a civil war, which would be detrimental not only to Palestinians but to all Muslims. Some Saudi commentators speculated that Hamas and Fatah are fighting over control of the Finance Ministry, and believe that Saudi intervention and anticipated financial assistance could resolve the conflict. END COMMENT.
OBERWETTER